Safety of Women Workers

3176. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to allow women to work in late-night shifts,

(b) if so, whether Government have taken into consideration the negative health impact on women working in late-night shifts, as per study conducted in various foreign countries;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether working in night shift increases a women's risk of developing breast cancer and other cancers and that night shift has the strongest indication of negative effect on pregnancy; and

(e) if so, whether Government would review its decision for the health and safety of women workers?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) On the demands of the Women's Organization and keeping in view the spirit of the International Labour Organization Protocol of 1990 to the Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948 and the present economic globalization, it has been decided to amend Section 66 of the Factories Act, 1948 to allow employment of women workers between 7.00 P.M. and 6.00 A.M. The Bill for the proposed amendment *inter-alia* provide that the occupier has to ensure occuptional safety and adequate protection of the women workers so employed by him.

(b) to (d) Some studies are reported to have associated shift work and night work in particular with sleep difficulties and other medical disorders including increasing risk of developing breast cancer. However, majority of developed countries are found to permit the night shift by women because there is no published evidence for any such condition to be regarded as an absolute reason to exclude them from shift work.

(e) Does not arise.

Opening of Recruiting Agencies

3177. SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state: